

**Perspectives on Masculinity**  
**Fall 2015**  
**Thursday from 4:00-6:30, Location 302 Bartlett**  
**Instructor: Tom Schiff**  
**Office: 120 Thoreau**  
**Office hours: by appointment, Phone: 577-5133**  
**email: [tschiff@umass.edu](mailto:tschiff@umass.edu)**

This course is an introduction to the study of men and masculinities. We will explore what it means to study masculinities from varying perspectives. In addition, we will utilize an intersectional approach to explore men's gender role socialization over the life span focused on men's developmental issues, gender role conflicts, and the impact of systems on the behavior and experiences of men and boys. Theory, research, and personal exploration are integrated through lectures, discussions, and learning activities.

### **INTENDED OUTCOMES**

As a result of taking this course, students should be able to:

- Analyze models for understanding masculinities;
- Explain concepts of masculinity in relation to some major theoretical schools of intellectual thought;
- Discuss masculinities and intersectionality;
- Evaluate the legitimacy of multiple points of view;
- Analyze and challenge their own social learning about masculinity;
- Plan and implement a project related to educating others about masculinities;
- Increase effective verbal and written communication skills.

### **TEXTS**

#### Required

Kilmartin, C. and Smiler, A.P. (2015). The masculine self. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY: Sloan Publishing.

hooks, b. (2004). The will to change: Men, masculinity, and love. New York: Washington Square Press.

Other readings may be distributed in class or posted online

You also will read one of the following:

Mirandé, A. (1997). Hombres y machos : Masculinity and Latino culture. Boulder, CO: Westview. (available as an e-book)

Gonzalez, R. (1996). Muy macho: Latino men confront their manhood. New York: Random House.

Majors, R. and Billson, J.M. (1992). Cool pose: The dilemmas of Black manhood in America. New York : Lexington Books.

Brod, H. (ed.). (1988). A mensch among men: Explorations in Jewish masculinity. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press.

Kimmel, M.S. (2009). Guyland: The perilous world where boys become men. New York: Harper Perennial

Pascoe, C.J. (2011). Dude, you're a fag: masculinity and sexuality in high school. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

## **COURSE STRUCTURE**

This course is a seminar. This means you are expected to take an active role in this course, and thus discussion and participation are crucial. I am well aware that individuals may have very different styles of participation and that not everyone is comfortable raising their hand or speaking out in front of others, regardless of class size. There will be multiple modes for participation, but one primary way is to show up on time, ready to go, and to be attentive to what is happening in class. I will assume that all students will have completed the readings prior to class, so if you are asked a question about the reading, you should at least be able to have some familiarity with the content to which I refer. I don't expect you to be an expert. Class sessions will include some combination of lecture, discussion, group work, learning activities, student presentation, and / or videos, all of which are intended to expand upon the readings.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Due dates are set. Assignments that are late automatically will receive a deduction in grade, and will not be accepted more than one week after the due date unless you make arrangements well in advance.** You also may hand in assignments early. If you have an excused absence from class (you are sick or have a pre-arranged reason to be absent) you still are expected to submit your assignment on time, as it is electronic submission.

**ALL WRITTEN DOCUMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED AS A WORD FILE ATTACHED IN MOODLE. IF THIS WILL BE A PROBLEM FOR YOU,**

**PLEASE WORK WITH ME TO MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS.  
OTHERWISE, NO EXCEPTIONS.**

I will check my email at least one time per day Monday through Thursday (and usually on Fridays too) by 4pm and will respond within 24 hours. In addition, I will, on occasion, send emails to the class and/or individuals, so it is useful for you to check your email regularly, as sometimes an email may actually contain important information. While not required, I strongly suggest you check this email account once a day as well.

A note on group work: I understand that group work can be challenging, hard, a pain in the neck, people don't pull their weight, etc. It also can be a great learning experience that comes from everyone pitching in and creating a synergy that is amazing. Unfortunately, most of us have had

**“My perspective on masculinity” paper, part 1** - A 3-5 page statement in which you will identify:

- What you hope to gain from taking this course;
- Any pertinent life experiences related to masculinities that may impact how you filter and learn the material presented in this course how you in life with men and masculinity;
- Any other preconceived ideas, biases, lenses, etc. that may impact how you filter and learn the material presented in this course.

Due September 24. 15 points.

**“My perspective on masculinity” paper, part 2** - A 3-5 page statement in which you will:

- Review progress made toward your learning “goals” identified in part 1 of this paper;
- Any pertinent learning that you may have gotten from this course that impacted any of the preconceived ideas, biases, lenses, etc., that you identified. Please be specific about what, if any, dissonance was created, and if possible, what specifically helped create that dissonance.

Due December 10. 15 points.

**Book Presentation** – In groups, you will read a book from the “You also will read one of the following” list above. As a group you will present the book to the class. The presentation must be between 30 and 45 minutes. The purpose of this presentation will be to present an overview of the content of this book and frame it with at least two of the theoretical perspectives from Kilmartin - biological, social, cultural, phenomenological - as well as integrating intersectional analyses.

Due November 12 (and varies by group). 30 points.

**Media / Social Media Review** – In groups, you will track a topic of your choice via media / social media sources for one month. The point is to see how masculinity is being framed in this context. You will need to stretch yourself so you can look at perspectives that differ from what you normally see. You then will present your findings to the class. Your presentation will include why you chose this topic, primary and/or prevalent themes and perspectives in these media, implications of those themes and perspectives, suggestions for action.

Due October 15 (and varies by group). 20 points.

**Research paper or Taking Action** – You have a choice. You can either plan and implement an action project focused on in some way taking a planned and deliberate action connected to masculinity/ies, or you can write a 10-12 page research paper on topic related to masculinity/ies. I also am open to other creative alternatives you suggest individually. Action projects may be done with others in class, papers are must be done on an individual basis. Whatever you choose to do, you must submit a 1-2 page proposal outlining what you intend by September 24. Action projects will require a 2-4 page summary paper as well. In addition, everyone will make a 5-7 minute presentation to the class about your results, learnings, findings, etc. This will happen at the last class, possibly the class before that as well.

Proposal due October 1, paper or summary due December 3. 20 points total (5 points for proposal, 15 points for the rest).

**Attendance and participation in class sessions** – Interaction is as essential part of this course. If you know you will miss more than 2 classes due to other commitments, please do not take this class. In addition, if conflicts arise (illness, games, family situations, religious holiday, etc.) you are expected to let me know either before or within 24 hour the class meets. Waiting any longer is unacceptable and will be considered an unexcused absence. By the way, excuses such as “I have a review session for another class” or “Oops, I forgot” are not considered examples of “etc.” Each unexcused absence will lower your final grade by 3 points (roughly half a grade). You are expected to be in class and ready to start at 4:00. More than ten minutes late (according to the professor’s time piece) will be considered one half of an unexcused absence.

### **GRADING SCALE**

**A = 94-100 pts. A- = 90-93.99 pts. B+ = 87-89.99 pts. B = 84-86.99 pts. B- = 80-83.99 pts. C+ = 77-79.99 pts. C = 74-76.99 pts. C- = 70-73.99 pts. D+ = 67-69.99 pts. D = 64-66.99 pts. F = 0-63.99 pts.**

*\*note\*: If you have particular learning disabilities/styles that will require other arrangements in order to participate fully in this class or to complete the required work, please let me know so we can work something out.*

***\*\*Note Well: You are responsible to know the content of this syllabus – due dates, formatting for assignments, etc. If you have questions, please ask them well in advance of due dates. I would hate to see you jeopardize your grade due to lack of preparation.***

## **WRITING EXPECTATIONS**

All assignments, whatever length or point value, should be clearly written and free of grammatical and spelling errors. Your writing should contain arguments or ideas that are well supported and thoroughly explained. It is not enough to write that you agree or do not agree with an idea presented in class or in the readings; you must write why and support your point of view. You also may not write that you disagree with an idea simply because you have not seen it in your life—this is not scholarly.

All assignments should be typed in 12 pt normal (not bold or italics) Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins and should be double spaced. **Please note that the default setting for left and right margins for Word is 1.25, so you must change this for written work in this class.** If the assignment requires research, the document should include parenthetical in-text citations and a works cited page (see APA style manual for formatting rules – a great website for this is <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). If assignments do not meet expectations, you may be asked to rewrite the assignment in order to earn points for it, or you may not receive points for the assignment at all. If you require any assistance with writing, I am available for some help, and on campus offices such as the Writing Center and Disability Services provide excellent writing services.

Please keep in mind, if an assignment calls for a minimum number of pages written, that means complete pages. It does not mean what the page number says on the bottom of the page. For example, if the minimum length is 4 pages, that means 4 full pages. Typically this will mean you have started a page 5.

One of the most important things you can learn in college is how to write. Knowledge of appropriate grammar, spelling, and punctuation, as well as clarity of thought, etc., will serve you in your work life after college. At no time are email / text abbreviations (such as CU L8R, BTW) appropriate in college coursework.

## **RIGHTS AND WELL-BEING OF ALL CLASS MEMBERS**

The University of Massachusetts community is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and the development of integrity. In order to thrive and excel, this community must preserve the freedom of thought and expression of all its members. The University of Massachusetts has a long and illustrious history in the area of academic freedom and

freedom of speech. A culture of respect that honors the rights, safety, dignity, and worth of every individual is essential to preserve such freedom. We affirm our respect for the rights and well-being of all members.

Thus, all members of this class are expected to engage in this class in a manner that:

- respects the dignity and essential worth of all individuals
- promotes a culture of respect throughout the university community
- respects the privacy, property, and freedom of others
- rejects bigotry, discrimination, violence, or intimidation of any kind
- practices personal and academic integrity and expect it from others
- promotes the diversity of opinions, ideas, and backgrounds that is the lifeblood of the university

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

“Intellectual honesty requires that students demonstrate their own learning during examinations and other academic exercises, and that other sources of information or knowledge be appropriately credited. Scholarship depends upon the reliability of information and reference in the work of others. Student work at the University may be analyzed for originality of content. Such analysis may be done electronically or by other means. Student work may also be included in a database for the purpose of checking for possible plagiarized content in future student submissions. No form of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or facilitating dishonesty will be condoned in the University community.” (*Academic Regulations 2006-2007*, pp. 7-8)

<http://www.umass.edu/registrar/media/academicregs.pdf>

In other words, any form of academic dishonesty will be taken extremely seriously by this professor. For example, plagiarism, which can be as “simple” as not citing where specific information emanates or cutting and pasting something from a website without attributing the source, will likely help you earn an immediate “F” in this course, and perhaps could have greater implications for your continued tenure as a student at this university.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:**

**Electronic courtesy:** There will be no use of phones, computers, etc. in class, unless you have discussed this with the professor and gotten prior approval. Texting, checking messages, etc. will not be tolerated and will impact your grade negatively. If you are communicating outside of class, I will perceive that you are not present in this class. You will receive one warning for the semester, after which time such behavior will constitute an unexcused absence (see Attendance and Participation above). Phones should be off unless you are expecting a call about a family member’s surgery or something of equal gravity. In that case, please let me know when you come into the room, and set your phone to silent or vibrate out of consideration for your classmates and your instructor.

**Prompt Communication of Difficulties:** If you are having a problem with the assignments or anything else related to the class it is your responsibility to communicate with the instructor promptly. Class issues and grading issues are to be discussed in person, NOT E-MAIL. It is the student's responsibility to make an appointment with the instructor to discuss the specific issue in person.

**Common Sense:** Just because it is not named specifically in this syllabus, do not assume it is acceptable. "You didn't tell us we couldn't" will not be accepted as an excuse or explanation.

## **Tentative SEMESTER CALENDAR – Assignments and Readings**

### **Week 1 – September 10**

Theorizing Masculinity/ies

### **Week 2 – September 17**

Reading:

Kilmartin and Smiler, chapters 1+2  
hooks, chapters 1+2

### **Week 3 – September 24**

hooks, chapters 3+8

*Research paper or Taking Action proposal due*

### **Week 4 – October 1**

Reading:

Kilmartin and Smiler, chapters 3-7

### **Week 5 – October 8**

Reading:

Kilmartin and Smiler, chapters 8+9

*“My perspective on masculinity” paper, part 1 due*

### **Week 6 – October 15**

Reading:

Kilmartin and Smiler, chapter 10  
hooks, chapter 6

*Media / Social Media Review 1 due*

### **Week 7 – October 22 - No class**

**Week 8 – October 29**

Reading:

Kilmartin and Smiler, chapter 11  
hooks, chapter 5

**Week 9 – November 5**

Kilmartin and Smiler, chapters 13+14  
hooks, chapter 7

**Week 10 – November 12**

hooks, chapter 9

*Book Presentation due*

**Week 11 – November 19**

hooks, chapter 10

**Week 12 – December 3**

*Research paper or Taking Action due*

**Week 13 – December 10**

*“My perspective on masculinity” paper, part 2 due*